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## SUCCESS STORY

# Healthy Habits Lead to Hardy Herds

**USAID husbandry training improves the lives and livelihoods of Afghan farmers**



Photo credit: IRD/AVIPA Plus

*Abdul Wahab is shown with his three-year-old dairy cow, Ablaka. Livestock is an integral part of rural life, providing Afghan families with dairy products, wool, meat, and manure for gardens.*

***Training by USAID/AVIPA Plus helps farmers provide better livelihoods for their families and enjoy a more stable source of income.***

Before Abdul Wahab signed up for a USAID-funded AVIPA Plus training course in animal husbandry, the farmer, who has no formal education, took his knowledge of the subject from family tradition and neighbors' advice.

That almost cost the life of one of Wahab's cherished dairy cows, Ablaka. "She was badly bloated from gas and wouldn't produce any milk," he said. "My neighbors said that the way to treat it was to feed her a bottle of shampoo every day. She soon became very sick. We nearly lost her."

To others, Ablaka and her counterpart cow, Tora, may only be dairy cows, but to Wahab they are important members of his family. They provide milk for his family of eight, and he sells the surplus for extra income in the village of Bagh-i-Pul in Kandahar Province.

After the harrowing experience with Ablaka, Wahab signed up for the AVIPA Plus animal husbandry training course. He was one of nearly 400 participants in the four-day course taught by members of the livestock faculty at Kandahar University. The farmers learned about animal nutrition, sanitation, and how to identify and treat common diseases.

"The problem wasn't just bloating. She wasn't getting enough water. I was only watering her in the morning, when really she needs it all day. She used to cry a lot. Now I know why."

With proper care and treatment, Ablaka's bloating went away and she was soon producing more milk than ever.

In addition to his two cows, Wahab has 40 hens and eight goats. Once crowded into the same barn, they are now housed separately to prevent the spread of parasites. Wahab also changes the straw more often and pays more attention to keeping his animals clean.

Wahab is one of more than 10,000 farmers who have participated in USAID funded AVIPA Plus animal husbandry courses in Kandahar Province. The courses offer training in nutrition, disease prevention, and management.